

SPALDING RURAL DISTRICT

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1920

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :—

The Population of the District at the census of 1911 was 13,186. It is now estimated at 14,008. The whole district consists of alluvial soil, mostly overlying clay. It is entirely flat. The only industry is agriculture and the whole population is directly or indirectly dependent thereon.

The general health of the district has been excellent during the past year. The total number of deaths reported was 128, as against 147 for 1919 and 172 for 1918.

The death rate per 1,000 population was only just over 9, in 1919 it was 10.

The rate for England and Wales during the year was 12.4, and that for the smaller towns 11.3, so that we are well below the average.

Besides cases transferred from other districts, there were 29 deaths in Pinchbeek, 25 in Gosberton, 19 in Donington, 25 in Moulton, 12 in Littleworth, and 4 in Cowbit.

Of these deaths 37 were over 70 years of age, 19 over 80, 5 over 90, and one was 100 years old; this last was at Moulton where, out of 25 deaths 11 were over 70 years old.

The principal causes of death were: Heart disease 12, cancer 14, phthisis 9 (as against 15 for 1919), bronchitis 11, congenital debility 9, and accident 4.

There were two deaths from euecephalitis lethargica.

The total number of births was 322. 146 males and 176 females. The Birth-rate per 1,000 population being 23, which is below that for England and Wales, but 3 above the previous year's rate for this district. The excess of births over deaths was 194, an increase of 67 over the previous year.

There were 20 illegitimate births.

There were 20 deaths of infants under 1 year of age, of which, one was illegitimate.

The infant death-rate was 62 per 1,000 births, as against 80 for England and Wales.

The number of cases of infectious disease notified during the year was 70. This is 20 above the previous year (if we deduct measles, which is no longer notifiable.)

There were 48 cases of scarlet fever, distributed as follows:—Moulton 17, Weston 4, Pinchbeek 3, Surfleet 2, Gosberton 17, Quadring 2, Donington 3.

Seven cases of pneumonia were reported:—Cowbit 2, Gosberton 1, Deeping S. Nicholas 4.

Six cases of tuberculosis: 1 at Deeping S. Nicholas, 2 at Cowbit, 1 at Donington, 1 at Gosberton, and 1 at Pinchbeek.

Four cases of diphtheria (as against 21 during 1919), Donington 2, Pinchbeek 1, Deeping S. Nicholas 1.

One case of erysipelas was reported: at Deeping S. Nicholas, and two cases of malaria: at Weston.

There were also two cases of euecephalitis lethargica, one at Quadring and one at Donington.

There is no isolation hospital in the district, except a small portable wooden structure for cases of great emergency.

I do not recommend a small building with no permanent trained nursing staff, neither can I advise your Council to join in any such undertaking. The most satisfactory arrangement possible would be an isolation hospital for the whole county, situate at Fosdyke, and served by motor-ambulances. I have recommended this for several years past, but it is of course a question for the Holland County Council.

However, as a makeshift, if any neighbouring Council had an isolation hospital with, at least, a resident trained matron, I would suggest to your Council the advisability of considering the question of joining in with them.

The following schools were closed during the year for infectious disease: Surfleet (measles) 26 Dec. to 28 Jan., Moulton Chapel (measles) 29 Dec. to 2 Feb., Cowbit (measles) 21 Jan. to 16 Feb., Donington Boys (measles) 2 Feb. to 23 Feb., Donington Infants (measles) 10 Feb. to 1 March, Tongue End (measles) 12 Feb. to 8 March, Gosberton Junior (measles) 16 Feb. to 8 March, Donington Girls (measles) 23 Feb. to 8 March, Quadring Cowley (measles) 26 Feb. to 22 March, Donington Infants (measles) 3 March to 15 March, Pinchbeek St. Matthews (measles) 29 March to 12 April, Quadring Infants (measles) 13 April to 26 April, Moulton Seas End (measles) 13 Oct. to 8 Nov., Pinchbeek West (measles and whooping cough) 4 March to 29 March, Quadring Eua-dyke (measles and whooping cough) 22 March to 12 April, Tongue End (whooping cough) 14 June to 5 July, Weston Hills (influenza) 27 Feb. to 8 March.

For non-infectious medical and surgical cases, the Spalding Hospital is of the very greatest value to the Rural District.

The amount of the Poor Law relief was £1,987 13s. 6d.—£357 more than during the previous year.

The number of houses in the district is 3,133, very few indeed being other than houses of the working classes.

The population being estimated at 14,008, this gives an average of little over four persons per house.

The estimated shortage last year was 200 of which 108 have been commenced up to the present date. The need for extra housing accommodation, must necessarily depend upon the agricultural outlook for the future, at present it is far from promising. Up to 31st December 1920 your Council had commenced building 56 houses, and finished 9. Private enterprise had commenced 26, and finished 24. From that date to the present time your Council has commenced 12 more, and finished 29. Private enterprise has commenced 14 more, and finished 14. Thus at the present time 108 have been commenced and 76 finished. They are distributed as follows:—

Parish	Up to 31st Dec., 1920.						From last to date.					
	S.R.D.C.			Private.			S.R.D.C.			Private.		
	C.	F.		C.	F.		C.	F.		C.	F.	
	12	12	—	4	2	—	4	6	8	3	1	5
Gosberton	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Pinchbeek	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Surfleet	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Deeping St. Nicholas	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Weston	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cowbit	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Moulton	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Donington	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Quadring	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	56	9	24	22	24	22	12	29	16	17	17	17

The greatest possible benefit to the district has been your Council's energetic management of the water supply, the more thickly populated parts of Donington, Surfleet, Pinchbeek, Weston, Moulton, and Deeping St. Nicholas being already supplied with excellent water. This has been an absolutely urgent necessity during the present year, and without your Council's action in the past, great distress would have undoubtedly prevailed at the present time.

Since my last yearly report the following extensions of your water mains have been laid:— (1) Pinchbeek Bars through Pothole to Branton's Bridge; (2) Pinchbeek West to Leveslake Drive; (3) Northgate Road, Pinchbeek down Small Drive and branches up and down the Glen side to Parker's and to Peacock's (late Kingston's farm; (4) Milestone Lane to the full extent of Pinchbeek Parish on the Surfleet boundary; (5) Otway House, Pinchbeek to Sharpe's Bridge; (6) Beek's Bank to Rigbolt, full extent of Pinchbeek Parish; (7) Moulton Chapel to Moulton Eaugate to South Holland Drain; (8) Moulton main road to Moulton Sea's End (this is not quite completed yet, owing to the difficulty of obtaining pipes during the strike); (9) "Oat Sheaf" Inn, Deeping St. Nicholas to Littleworth Station, supplied by two bores, one at the "Wheat Sheaf" and one at the "Hop Pole."

It is worthy of remark that in spite of the present prolonged drought, the pressure at Jockey Bore, Pinchbeek West, has only fallen 1½ lbs., from 19½ lbs. per sq. inch to 18 lbs. per sq. inch.

This pressure is artificially increased to 24 lbs. per sq. inch. Should the pressure fall seriously, the question of continually running bores in the neighbourhood would have to be considered.

A petition from the inhabitants of Cowbit has recently been sent in, and I beg to strongly support this. They request that water be supplied to the village. They have no water supply except the (frequently polluted) New River, and open drains. This supply is now useless.

I would recommend that the water supply be carried from Broadgate Farm, Weston Hills down Fendike-road, then past the small holdings, across the Railway Station, and up Church-lane to the Bank, with extensions both ways along the bank.

The distance is approximately 3½ miles and the number of houses supplied would be 100, as well as the schools at Cowbit.

I should reckon the average population of Cowbit at five per house, you would, therefore, supply about 500 people with water.

There is no other part of your district in such urgent need of reliable drinking water, which could be supplied so easily.

Dr. Tuxford, Medical Officer of Health for the County of Holland, in his annual report for 1919, states: "As in the matter of providing new houses, the Spalding Rural District Council has been the most progressive in the county as regards water supply."

There have been few cases of gross overcrowding in the district, and such as have occurred temporarily have been remedied through the personal action of the Sanitary Inspector. The erection of new houses has already had a salutary effect.

There are no "unhealthy areas" in the district. No complaints as to unfitness for habitation, as regards any houses have been received during the year. No closing or demolition orders have been made, but many minor defects have been remedied on the recommendation of the Sanitary Authority.

There is no pollution of rivers or streams in the district. This was at one time a serious nuisance but has been completely remedied by the vigilance of the Sanitary Inspector for many years past.

The schools have been inspected, and are satisfactory. The slaughter houses and bake houses, cow sheds, and dairies have been inspected frequently, and are now in excellent condition, and are repeatedly lime-washed.

The number of dwelling houses inspected was 816, besides which 31 hawkers' and showmen's living vans were also inspected.—I am, Ladies & Gentlemen, Your Obedient Servant,

S. H. PERRY,

Medical Officer of Health.

July 11th, 1921.

